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Letter dated 6 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the Final Declaration of the High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028 (see annex I),** held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 20 to 22 June 2018, and the Co-Chairs' summary of the Conference (see annex II).**

The participants in the Conference have requested, in the Final Declaration, that the Co-Chairs' summary, accompanied by the Final Declaration, be presented to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

Therefore, I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 21, before or during the high-level political forum, as a joint contribution of Tajikistan and the United Nations towards the advancement of Sustainable Development Goal 6 and other water-related goals.

(*Signed*) Mahmadamin **Mahmadaminov**

* A/73/50.
** The annexes are being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex I to the letter dated 6 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028

Final Declaration

Promoting action and policy dialogue

Dushanbe, Tajikistan
20–21 June 2018

The High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 20-21 June 2018, to discuss how to achieve the objectives of the Decade, contained in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/222 of 21 December 2016, in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Heads of State and Government, ministers and other high-level dignitaries took part in this historical gathering together with representatives of international and regional organizations, local governments, civil society, the private sector and academia. The Conference also provided a timely and necessary platform for elaborating recommendations in the run-up of the next session of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development where, among other issues, the Sustainable Development Goal 6 to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" will be discussed. The Conference built on the outcomes of the Eighth World Water Forum, the High-Level Panel on Water, the Water for Life Decade and other major water-related events and platforms at the global and regional level.

We, the participating representatives of states and organizations,

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/222 of 21 December 2016, by which it proclaimed the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 (hereinafter referred to as the "Water Action Decade"),

Also *recalling* the United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which reiterates the importance of "ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" as a Sustainable Development Goal to be achieved by 2030, the underpinning importance of water related issues in other goals and targets in order to reach the overall Agenda and the centrality of the "No One Left Behind" principle,

Further *recalling* resolutions 68/157 of 18 December 2013 on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and 70/169 of 17 December 2015 on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation of the United Nations General Assembly,

Taking note of the efforts and extensive work carried out by the High-Level Panel on Water,

Acknowledging the additional challenges facing countries with water scarcity and concerned with the impacts of such challenges, including inter alia their ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,

Highlighting the challenge of rapid population growth and the importance of water management in disaster risk reduction in mitigating and adapting to climate change and in ensuring ecosystem protection, particularly of watersheds in mountain areas, wetlands, deltas and in coastal zones, in order to increase the resilience of communities, and *noting* that water management can contribute, as applicable, to the implementation of relevant multilateral agreements, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the 2015 Paris Agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Stressing the need to manage in an integrated and sustainable manner water resources from source to sea around the water, food, energy and environment nexus, including by promoting the concept of circular economy and other relevant solutions to reduce, recycle and safely reuse water,

Expressing concern about the current and projected adverse impacts of climate change on water resources and sanitation, as well as the challenges posed by pathogens, nutrients and emerging pollutants, including pharmaceuticals and microplastics, that are threatening human health and the quality of surface and groundwater,

Bearing in mind the need to implement integrated urban water management, including sustainable waste management systems, in line with the New Urban Agenda, as part of Integrated Water Resource Management, by implementing inter alia nature-based solutions, decentralized wastewater management and improved rainwater management and harvesting,

Recognizing that, according to Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation, the world is not on track to achieve water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets at the global level by 2030 at the current rate of progress,

Recognizing that effective lake and river basin organizations, water planning and target setting at the appropriate levels, including of drinking water supply and sanitation safety, are key to the sustainable management of water resources and require coordination of actors, development of infrastructure, benefit sharing and harmonization of national and basin wide development agendas,

Recognizing that parliamentarians and citizens make an important contribution to water governance alongside national governments, as well as regional and local authorities, as applicable,

Reemphasizing the key role of women for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6, their insufficient representation in water-related decision-making processes and among water professionals at all levels, the disproportionate burden carried by many women and girls for water collection and use, their specific needs of safe water and sanitation facilities and the need to create an enabling environment to address these issues,

Acknowledging the importance of ensuring water availability for civilians and protecting civilian water infrastructure and service delivery in the event of conflicts and natural disasters, as well as for refugee and migrant populations living in informal or inadequate housing,

Looking forward to the Mid-Term Review of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, as an important milestone focused on the goals of the Decade and water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

Noting the ongoing efforts by UN-Water in responding to the expectations of the international community, supporting the monitoring of the SDG 6 targets and providing coordination among its members,

Also *noting* the possibility to create an International Center for the Water Action Decade in Dushanbe with the support of the Government of Tajikistan and other interested parties to sustain the process towards implementation of the goals of the Water Action Decade and the organization of Water Action Decade Conferences,

Hereby *reiterate* our determination to achieve the objectives of the Water Action Decade and *declare* to:

Promote, at the local, national, regional and global levels, opportunities for public and private investment in infrastructure, including through the development of innovative financial instruments and mechanisms, and seek to *increase* the efficiency of investment to conserve and sustainably manage freshwater, wastewater and water contained in soil and vegetation, support community-based efforts and develop non-conventional water resources, such as water reuse and desalination;

Strengthen the capacities, resources and skills, as well as *improve* knowledge generation and exchange of practices, to support national and local governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in those countries and for those people furthest behind;

Make concentrated and coordinated efforts to build innovative, robust, flexible and fair systems for source to sea Integrated Water Resources Management, to increase water use efficiency and productivity, particularly in agriculture, energy, tourism, urban and rural development, as well as industry, to better appreciate the value of water and associated ecosystem services, to reduce emissions and the transport of hazardous substances and to take into consideration the serious impacts on the quality and availability of water resources caused from extractive activities;

Commit to reduce inequalities in access and ensure affordability of safe drinking water and sanitation services that are basic human needs, essential to the health and well-being of families and communities, to avoid any kind of discrimination and to support countries and communities with specific needs and people suffering from poverty and in vulnerable situations, especially women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and those living in remote areas, going beyond the household, particularly targeting schools, healthcare facilities and workplaces;

Improve communication and access to practical, water-related information and funding to empower communities at all levels, through clear messages, to promote participation, equity, improved accountability and social innovation, supporting the engagement of civil society representatives in decision-making processes related to the rational, transparent and sustainable use and management of water resources and the provision of water-related services;

Step up the efforts to develop tools, build institutional and human resources capacity, foster technology exchange, improve data that are appropriately disaggregated, disseminate knowledge, including traditional knowledge, skills and enhanced scientific and technical know-how to better understand the water cycle, contribute to the identification of appropriate solutions, including through South-South and triangular cooperation and improved research, education and training with a local perspective and special attention to children and youth;

Facilitate partnerships at all levels among different kinds of stakeholders, including public authorities, the private sector, civil society organizations and academia, with the engagement of women, youth, local communities and indigenous peoples, as appropriate, to develop and implement actions that address problems

related to water and sanitation at suitable levels and to promote the all-of-society engagement necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Prioritize water diplomacy and transboundary cooperation in line with the applicable principles of international law by strengthening inter alia the means of information and data exchange, open and inclusive multi-level and intersectoral dialogue in order to foster mutually beneficial solutions and institutional arrangements, such as basin commissions and plans, among riparian countries, for the development of transboundary river basins, lakes and aquifers and for protection of ecosystems and recharge zones;

Promote actions to address water-related disasters by significantly decreasing loss of life and damage as percentage of gross domestic product, by treating investment in disaster risk reduction as integral to expanding capacity for socioeconomic growth, by integrating science into policy, by substantially increasing investment in disaster risk reduction and establishing financing and investment principles and by supporting alliance of alliances in recognition that climate change may exacerbate water-related disasters, contributing to promote action for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities;

Recall the United Nations Secretary General's plan for the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 as a blueprint to coordinate and catalyze action throughout the Decade and *invite* the United Nations Secretary General to report to the Member States about the progress made by the United Nations and its entities with the implementation of this action plan;

Note the intention of the Government of Tajikistan to hold Water Action Decade Conferences in Dushanbe on a biennial basis and to keep organizing them in an open and inclusive manner and *invite* all states, the United Nations, including UN-Water, and other relevant stakeholders, to actively participate in this Dushanbe Process;

Invite countries to consider the establishment of Water Action Decade centers and partnerships on specific themes, such as one for water and disasters, or at the regional level and use the already existing water-related centers, programs and partnerships, such as those under the auspices of the United Nations and its entities, including UNESCO Centers and Chairs, as useful mechanisms to enhance dialogue, cooperation, technical and scientific transfer and development for the effective implementation of the Decade;

Further *invite* all Member States to consider appointing water champions, who will play a mobilizing role for the Water Action Decade;

Strongly *recommend* Member States to prepare and adopt national strategies and plans and implement actions for the achievement of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets, as well as the goals of the Water Action Decade;

Ask the United Nations, within existing resources, regional organizations, International Financial Institutions, philanthropic organizations, the private sector and development partners to support the implementation of the Water Action Decade, particularly in developing countries, Least Developed Countries, countries suffering from water scarcity, Small Island Developing States and Land-Locked Developing Countries and middle-income countries, considering their specific circumstances;

Request the Government of Tajikistan to present the Chair's Summary of this Conference, accompanied by this Declaration, to the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and other relevant venues;

Urge all Member States to actively participate in the preparation process of a United Nations General Assembly resolution on the Mid-Term Comprehensive

Review of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, to be undertaken during the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly;

Request the Secretariat of this First High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, to collect, in collaboration with the International Steering Committee, the actions and partnerships that were proposed by the participating states and organizations during this Conference in a document to be entitled "Call for Action and Partnership";

Invite the participating states and organizations to share the progress made on the actions and partnerships proposed during this Conference at inter alia the Second Water Action Decade Conference, and as a contribution towards the Mid-Term Review of the Decade;

Decide that the theme of the Second Water Action Decade Conference shall be "catalyzing water action and partnership at the local, national, regional and global levels" to achieve the goals of the Water Action Decade and water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets;

Express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Tajikistan for hosting the Water Action Decade Conferences in Dushanbe and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants; we also *express* our sincere appreciation to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Water and other partners for their support.

Annex II to the letter dated 6 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028

Co-Chairs' summary

Dushanbe, Tajikistan
20–22 June 2018

The High Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, organized by the Government of Tajikistan with the support of the United Nations, met in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, on 20-22 June 2018. Under the theme "Promoting Action for Policy Dialogue", the Conference sought to discuss the ways in which Member States, the United Nations, other international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector, as well as civil society and other stakeholders, can contribute to the Decade and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

High-level delegations and representatives came from 120 countries, including heads of state and government, deputy prime-ministers, ministers and deputy ministers, ambassadors, permanent representatives to the United Nations and special envoys, representatives of 46 international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programs, as well as representatives of local governments, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the private sector. In total, more than 1,500 people took part in two days of discussion about one of the most pressing issues and ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Conference provides valuable opportunities for Member States and other stakeholders to promote actions, partnerships and policy dialogue, as well as review the implementation of the Decade and progress made towards implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 - ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and other water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. The high-level international conference will also ensure timely follow-up in view of the Mid-Term and Final Review of the Decade.

This Conference comprised an Opening Ceremony at the level of Head of State and Government, a Plenary Session where all heads of official delegations were invited to deliver a statement, Action Panels on specific themes, as well as Pre-Conference Events and Side Events. The Action Panels focused on the Sustainable Development Goals and on the objectives of the Water Action Decade, addressing progress in reporting, analysis of main gaps in implementation, reporting on progress to support partnerships and other proposals made by the different actors, sharing innovative practices and presenting new proposals for actions. Pre-Conference Events were held to promote dialogues for major groups that are important for water management but are not sufficiently represented in decision-making on water-related issues, such as women, children, youth and academia. Special attention was paid to cover the issues and enable participation of Least Developed Countries, Land-Locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Opening Ceremony

During the opening ceremony of the Conference, nine speakers at the level of Heads of State and Government and heads of international organizations shared their views and insights on various issues at global, regional and country levels. In his speech, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, emphasized the need to mobilize and address water-related issues at all levels. He stated the intention of Tajikistan to convene this conference every two years and to create an international center in Dushanbe as a contribution to the implementation of the Water Action Decade. He also praised the positive dynamics of water cooperation in Central Asia and the development of a program to provide the population of Tajikistan with safe drinking water by 2030, in accordance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In his message, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, H.E. Mr. Liu Zhenmin, underscored how water and sanitation are at the core of sustainable development and the need to go beyond business as usual. This conference represented the first opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in the United Nations Secretary-General's plan for the Water Action Decade 2018-2028. In this regard, he drew the attention of the participants on the outcome document of the High-Level Panel on Water and to the new approach it proposes to achieve the water-related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations stands ready to support countries in implementing water and sanitation-related targets.

The opening ceremony of the Conference was also addressed by the President of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Gurbanguli Berdimuhamedov, by the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Mamnoon Hussain, by the Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, H.E. Mr. Abdullah Abdullah, by the Vice President of the World Bank for Europe and Central Asia, H.E. Mr. Cyril Muller, by the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations and the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, H.E. Mrs. Marie Chatardová, by the President of International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Chair of UN-Water, H.E. Mr. Gilbert Houngbo, and by United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Coordinator of Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, H.E. Ms. Gerda Verburg. A video message was also delivered by H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic and President of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly. The ceremony was moderated by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan and Chairman of the National Organizing Committee of the conference, H.E. Mr. Kohir Rasulzoda.

Plenary Session: Mobilizing Actions for Sustainable Water Development

This session, which was co-chaired by Prime Minister Rasulzoda and Under-Secretary-General Liu and continued during both days of the conference, provided an opportunity for all the heads of official delegations to deliver a statement. It was opened by a keynote speech on the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation. Its key message was that the world is not on track to achieve SDG 6, particularly with regard to safe drinking water and sanitation. It provided some analytical insights on the most pressing issues. This speech was followed by reports from the four Pre-Conference Events, held the previous day: Women Water Forum; Children Water Forum; Water and Science for Sustainable Future; Climate and Water Dialogue. Several high-level representatives expressed support and keen interest in the transformation of the Dushanbe Conferences into the "Dushanbe Process" for the Water Action Decade and in the creation of an International Center for the Water Action Decade in Dushanbe, aimed at supporting the implementation of the Decade, including the organization of the biennial Water Decade Conferences.

Action Panels

The main discussions then continued within twelve Action Panels under the overarching theme of conference "Promoting Action for Policy Dialogue". They were co-organized by various entities of the United Nations and other international organizations and development partners. They focused discussions on issues that play an important role for the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028.

Action Panel 1.1 on Drinking Water and Sanitation

Co-organized by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), this panel stressed the need to empower partnership for action, to ensure good health and educational outcomes, to use innovative water, sanitation and hygiene financing, particularly for the vulnerable, and to strengthen targeted monitoring. Setting country-tailored national targets and adapted progress indicators for water, sanitation and hygiene was also emphasized as vital and facilitating efficient and effective water governance. It was further highlighted water and sanitation safety planning at utility or community level to lead the way in transforming drinking-water and sanitation service provision. The panel stressed strongly increased and well-leveraged investments as essential to improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation services that are resilient to the adverse impacts of climate and demographic changes.

Action Panel 1.2 on Integrated Water Resource Management, Water Efficiency and Productivity

This panel, which was co-organized by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Global Water Partnership (GWP), concluded that promoting holistic, balanced approaches to water resources management will help realize not only SDG 6, but help make progress across the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, it was stressed that Integrated Water Resource Management must be applied and include rural and urban perspectives, social and economic aspects, address inequalities and inclusiveness and use source-to-sea approaches. Accounting and auditing was also put forward as essential to manage water resources. Therefore, tools for resource management and capacity building were highlighted, together with the need for political will and responsibility. Several speakers also echoed the keywords partnerships and community involvement for successful water management.

Action Panel 1.3 on Water Quality and Ecosystems

Co-organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Stockholm International Water Institute, the key messages from this panel included that users, consumers and polluters of water resources from agricultural, industrial, energy and touristic areas need to exchange information, collaborate and identify shared objectives to protect water resources and ecosystems. The need to development an open monitoring network was highlighted as vital for the valorization of water quality rather than quantity values. Moreover, cooperation was stressed as crucial to ensure the research and knowledge dissemination and to improve the scientific understanding on emerging pollutants and the impact of climate change on water quality and water-related ecosystems. The panel further noted the need to develop effective solutions and policy responses among all stakeholders.

Action Panel 2.1 on Capacity Building including Improving Knowledge and Education

Co-organized by the United Nations Development Programme and UNESCO, this panel emphasized how capacity development to achieve the SDGs is about country ownership and leadership, as well as adaptive, integrated, whole of society approaches that take into account the broader economic and socio-political context. The panel also stressed that it is a continuous long-term process and requires measurement based on clear evidence of relevant changes and, at the same time, a pre-requisite and zero-regret investment in moving towards water for sustainable development. The need for a holistic approach encompassing all levels of water education was also highlighted, as well as addressing its tertiary and professional dimensions and providing training for policy makers and the mass media, thereby contributing to a water-smart society. Technology was recognized as a disruptor and innovator for water-related capacity development, knowledge and education for all.

Action Panel 2.2 on Water-related Communication, Advocacy and Networking

Co-convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN-Water, the session concluded that different stakeholders need to consider aligning their advocacy, communication and networking efforts and integrate bottom-up approaches. Successful advocacy efforts were stressed to require multi-sector coalitions and cooperation with the involvement of the public, the private sector, as well as major groups to avoid silos. It also concluded that advocacy efforts at global, regional, national, local and community levels may be supported by regular dialogues, conferences and meetings to promote the delivery and implementation of water-related goals. Communication campaigns, preparation of outreach materials and reports targeted with clear and tailor-made narratives was also highlighted as important to promote the involvement of academia, youth, women and civil society. The panel further noted the need for good case studies to be presented and collected in order for lessons to be learned and replicated.

Action Panel 2.3 on Water-related Partnerships for Action

Organized by the GWP, the session emphasized three strong messages: partnerships contribute to good water governance and create platforms for participation and dialogue; they need to understand the multi-level governance context in which they operate and to be mindful in their design of differences in capacity, cultures, power, personalities, and economies; they are critical as they create a space for the discovery of new and innovative financial solutions to our complex water challenges. The panel further proposed to initiate a dialogue between the many existing water partnership organizations to strengthen collaboration efforts for sustainable water management and to utilize the flexibility and energy of young water professionals as catalysts for partnership building.

Action Panel 3.1 on Water, Food, Energy and Environment Nexus

Organized by FAO, the session stressed the water, energy and food nexus and the dependency on the environment and ecosystems for their sustainability, as well as the inter-relations with a circular economy. The panel highlighted the inherent complexity in these relationships, while presenting some risks and potential for conflict, as well as the opportunity for a new way of looking at shared benefits and opportunities. The panel noted understanding these relations requires investments in capacity building at various levels. Furthermore, particular emphasis was given to support and empower women's groups, particularly smallholder farmers. The panel noted the nexus approach works well with the SDG process, which offers

opportunities for integration across a range of SDGs through a "systems approach". Investments into the nexus was also emphasized to require tradeoffs based on detailed stakeholder negotiations, followed by the development of joint plans, mutual understanding and agreement on tradeoffs, leading to political decisions. The panel further noted to the consideration of the nexus can provide an effective tool for negotiations across transboundary water resources.

Action Panel 3.2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

Co-organized by Switzerland and the European Union, the session stressed the importance for a resilience approach as key to link climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. Panelists noted the need to know the risks and be prepared, as prevention is much more efficient than response and recovery. Panelist noted, although one-third of official development assistance goes to prevention and risk reduction, costs to recover are more than threefold. The panel further noted the need for innovative solutions, as well as overcoming uncertainty and aiming for inclusive, transformative world that leaves no one behind, as defined by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Therefore, the panel stressed the need for innovative financing to implement multi-sectorial and multi service programs that respond to the needs of all communities. Furthermore, the panel emphasized the need for all levels to cooperate at multilateral, regional, transboundary, national and local levels, as well as the importance to find means to implement the global agenda in a coherent, holistic, integrated and inclusive manner.

Action Panel 3.3 on Water Sustainability in Cities and Human Settlements

Organized by UN-Habitat, the session stressed despite the accelerating population growth and urbanization, no one should be left behind for the provision of water supply and sanitation. Panelists emphasized attention should be given to vulnerable groups in cities living in slums, as well as to displaced people because of conflicts and environmental hazards. They highlighted for cities, it is important to develop appropriate policy and legal frameworks to guide the urbanization process and consider urbanization as an opportunity for development. Furthermore, the need was stressed for transparent financing mechanisms and monitoring instruments to reach a balance between, on the one hand, affordability for the poor and, on the other, cost recovery for water service providers. Panelists also noted the need for efficient use of water resources in cities against the background of growing population and climate change, therefore the importance to live with nature in a river basin and recover, reuse and recycle water as much as possible. Finally, it was emphasized efforts should be taken to enhance the capacity of water utilities and local governments through capacity building and financial decentralization to meet the challenges of rapid urbanization.

Action Panel 4.1 on Financing, Investment and Resilient Infrastructure

Co-organized by the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the session concluded that financing, investment and resilient infrastructure under the SDGs aim substantially higher than the Millennium Development Goals, and therefore there is a need for a shift under these new circumstances. The panel stressed the need not only for additional financial, but also human and technical resources, noting the opportunities for efficiency gains in developing countries to be as much as 65% of utility costs. The panel also noted the need to explore full continuum of public, concessional and commercial financing solutions, and the importance that governments commit sufficient own resources to this vital sector. The panel further noted the need for service providers to shift towards greater credit worthiness and the importance of concessional financing to help toward

financial sustainability. The panel highlighted financing options will show results once financial and technical efficiency have been coupled with improved governance and institutional reforms, and private sector resources are in an environment of effective institutional frameworks for management and oversight. The panel noted the importance for service providers to look at blending public finance with alternative revenue sources, such concessional and commercial finance, as well as governance, regulatory and tariff challenges that need to be dealt with to make business models viable.

Action Panel 4.2 on Transboundary Cooperation and Water Diplomacy

Co-convened by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, the session concluded that international water law is fundamental to ensure long-term predictability of cooperation, prevent adverse transboundary impacts and ensure equitable and reasonable use of water resources. The panel highlighted that boosting water diplomacy building on the benefits of transboundary water cooperation allows preventing or resolving conflicts, while promoting regional stability and integration. The need for resources to promote and strengthen transboundary water cooperation was stressed, as well as the importance of water diplomacy to implement coordinated actions to develop transboundary basins in a sustainable manner. To achieve these outcomes, the panel recommended fostering progress on the development of agreements and effective institutions to support long-term, predictable and equitable transboundary water cooperation, as well as increasing financial and water diplomacy efforts to support sustainable development in transboundary basins, building on the benefits of cooperation.

Action Panel 4.3 on Water for Vulnerable People, including Refugees and Migrants

Co-organized by UN-Water and the International Organization for Migration with the support of FAO and in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the session discussed the issues related to water and people in vulnerable situations, such as migrants, internally displaced people, women and rural poor. The panel concluded that the SDGs cannot be fully achieved if the conditions of these groups are not considered and their needs addressed. The panel highlighted water challenges, such as scarcity, may be among the drivers of migration, but can also be caused by migration, and climate change further exacerbates the pressure on water resources. The panel noted most of the poor and vulnerable people live in rural areas and are smallholders who rely on agriculture for their subsistence. The panel also noted data and information on water and its relationship with migration is scarce and must be improved. Panelists highlighted water scarcity can be driven by multiple factors, which must be known to design appropriate solutions for vulnerable people. They further noted migration governance needs a comprehensive approach, including other perspectives such as water management, rural development and poverty reduction, which requires cooperation of different stakeholders, such as governments, international organizations, research, civil society and the private sector. The panel stressed the need to identify different categories of vulnerable people, such as women and youth, so that tailored strategies to each category can be defined.

Side Events

Moreover, six Side Events were organized by global, regional and national actors. These activities created an additional platform for wider discussion on various water-related issues and priority themes of the conference:

– Side Event 1: Fostering innovation in water and agriculture for smallholders;

- Side Event 2: Meeting of the extended committee in the framework of the "Student research competition on sustainable management of natural resources in Central Asia and Afghanistan project";
- Side Event 3: Young water professionals;
- Side Event 4: Migration in the age of vanishing waters;
- Side event 5: Implementation of the water sector reform in the Republic of Tajikistan;
- Side event 6: Public dialogue on the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018.

Exhibition

An important highlight of the conference was the International Exhibition "Water for Sustainable Development", where organizations at the international, regional and national level showcased their experience. This event attested the presence of enormous potential to address urgent water issues.

Excursions

The National Organizing Committee organized excursions to the Nurek Hydropower Plan, the Rogun Hydropower Plant, the Hissor Fortress and the Sarez Lake, on the last day of the conference for participants to explore potential solutions to water-related issues, as well as to learn more about the history and experience the friendliness of the Host Country.

Media Coverage

The conference was widely covered by media, including through social media. Millions of people in Tajikistan and beyond were able to follow this important international event, obtain the necessary information, keep abreast of the global water agenda and, to some extent, be part of it. The official hashtags of the conference were #DushanbeWaterConf and #WaterActionDecade.

Outcome Documents

The High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, produced three outcome documents: this Co-chairs' Summary, a Final Declaration, which was adopted by acclamation by the representatives of the participating states and organizations, and a Call for Action and Partnership, which was prepared by the Conference Secretariat on the basis of the proceedings of the conference. The Final Declaration and the Call for Action and Partnership are both annexed to this document.

The Final Declaration reflects the key messages that emerged from the policy dialogue and several important conclusions and recommendations. In particular, this document stresses the main challenges ahead and recalls the key instruments available to address them. The Final Declaration calls upon Member States and other stakeholders inter alia to increase water-related investment and its efficiency, to reduce inequalities in access and ensure affordability of safe drinking water and sanitation services for all, to address water-related disasters by substantially increasing investment, among other things. It also notes the intention of the Government of Tajikistan to hold Water Action Decade Conferences in Dushanbe on a biennial basis and to keep organizing them in an open and inclusive manner and invites all Member States, the United Nations, including UN-Water, as well other relevant stakeholders, to actively participate in the Dushanbe Process.

The Call for Action and Partnership contains all the initiatives that were proposed during this conference as a contribution to the implementation of the Water Action Decade at all levels. This document aims at taking stock of the actions and partnerships in the framework of the Decade and at contributing to their follow-up. It also includes the proposal to establish an International Center for the Water Action Decade in Dushanbe, as well as the idea to establish a register for actions and partnerships that contribute to achieve the objectives of the Decade, starting from those included in the document.

The conference was a clear success, largely thanks to the joint and coordinated efforts of all parties. The Government of Tajikistan will present this Co-chairs' Summary, the Final Declaration and the Call for Action and Partnership to the United Nations General Assembly at its Seventy-Third Session. The participants expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government of Tajikistan for hosting the Conference in Dushanbe and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants. They also manifested gratitude to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Water and other partners for their support.